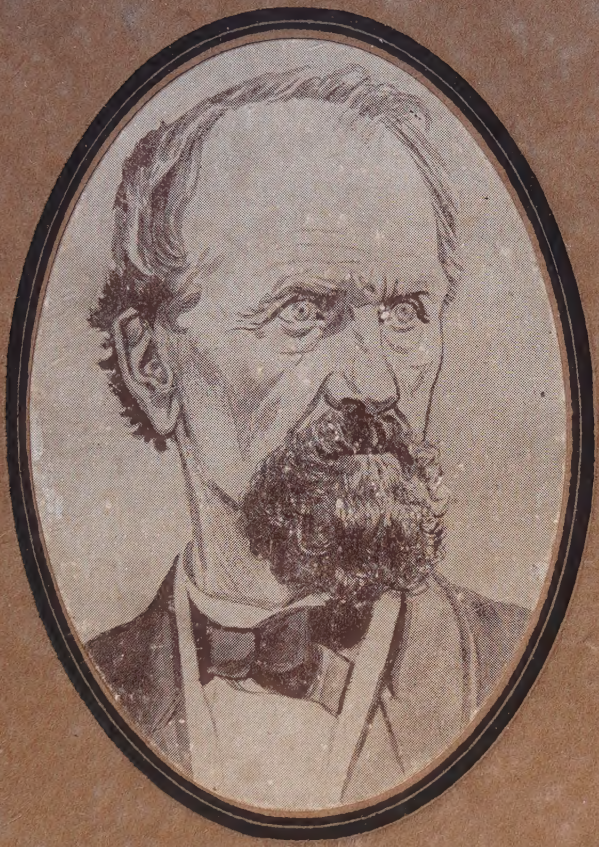
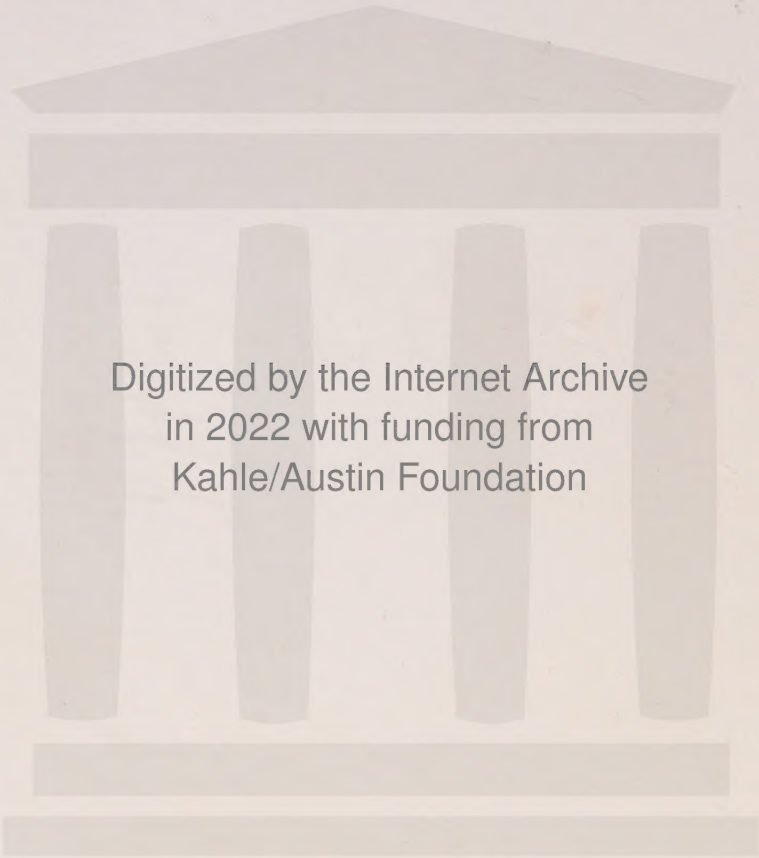
"The Fotygraft Album"



By

FRANK WING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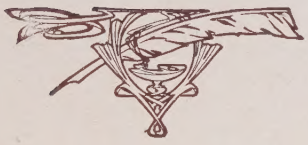
"The Fotygraft Album"

Shown to the New Neighbor by
Rebecca Sparks Peters
Aged Eleven



Drawings and Text by

Frank Wing

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"TURN OVER"

" Why, how d'do, Mrs. Miggs? Come right on in. Ma's jist run over t' Smith's a minute t' borruh some thread and some m'lasses and a couple uh aigs. Aw! yes, come on — she'll be right back. Let's see: S'pose we set on th' sofa and I'll show yuh th' album, so's yuh'll kinda begin t' know some of our folks. We like t' be real neighborly and make new folks feel t' home. There! now we're fixed.

" This here first one's ma when she was little. Ain't she cute? Her Uncle Seth kep' a store up t' Davenport and he give her them furs. Real mink, I think it was.

" Turn over."

"That's Aunt Mary Jane Darnell. Her jimpson-weed salve and peach perserves was th' best he ever see, pa says. She couldn't abide a man that primped."

"Them's grampa and gramma Sparks, ma's pa and ma. Grampa liked bees and made lots of money off'm honey. He was awful good t' gramma.

"Ma says you kin allus trust a bee man."

"Here's Ferdinand Ashur Peebles, a favorite cousin of ma's. He ain't got much time fer them 't ain't so good as what he is, so pa don't like him so very well. Says he's a hippercrit. One time ma was showin' this pitchure t' somebody and she says, 'This is a boy we're proud of: Cousin Ferd, full of good works — ' 'and prunes,' pa puts in, and it made ma awful mad.

"Turn over."

" Them's pa's pa and ma, grampa 'n' gramma Peters. Jist look at her feet! All her folks toes in — even pa, some, but he denies it. Grampa's got a turribul temper. Onct he was up in a tree a-sawin' out limbs and a little branch scratched him onto his head and he turned round quick's a wink, a-snarlin', and bit it right smack off. Fact! "

"That's Sophrony Ann Gowdey, kind of a distant cousin of ma's. She's gifted weth th' secont sight. Onct when grampa lost his false teeth they called her in and she set right here in this room and tranced and after a bit she woke up suddent and says, wild like, 'Seek ye within th' well!' she says; so they done it, but they didn't find 'm. But only a week afterwards, when they cleaned th' cistern, there them teeth was. Pa says, 'Well, anyhow, Phrony knowed they was in th' damp,' he says.

"Turn over."

"That's Uncle Mel Burgstresser. Don't he look like Charles Dickens, th' great Scotch poet, though? I think he does, exactly. He's ma's uncle, but he's sich a nice man that even pa likes him. They can't nobody help likin' him, he's so nice; but ever'body laughs at him, he says sich blunderin' things sometimes. Onct when Aunt Alviny (that's his wife) was a-makin' oyster soup, Uncle Mel he come and looked over her shoulder and says, 'Put lots o' water in it, mother, 'cause I'm hungry,' he says.

"Turn over."

" That's my cousin, Willie Sparks, same age as me — but not when that pitchure was took. He wasn't only 9 then. Don't he look awful meek? But mebbe you think he ain't got a temper! One time when his pa come home from work after dark and Willie ain't got his chores done, he scolded him, and when Willie brung in th' coal fer th' kitchen stove he was cryin' and he jist hauls off, he's s' mad, and kicks th' stove an awful welt, and says, ' Yuh will burn coal, will yuh! ' he says.

" Turn over."

"That's ma's cousin, Rebecca, and her man, took th' day they was married. Him and her quarreled somethin' awful, she gener'ly havin' th' upper hand. I was named after her."

"That there's Peletiah Parrett, a friend of pa's since they was boys. He's a singin' school teacher and he's been to our house lots of times, but he lives at Ohio. He kin sing awful good. You'd jist ort t' hear him sing — well, I fergit what th' name of th' piece is but it goes like this:

"'Three dretful groans he heered
And then her ghost appeared
From head t' foot besmeared
Weth purple gore.'"

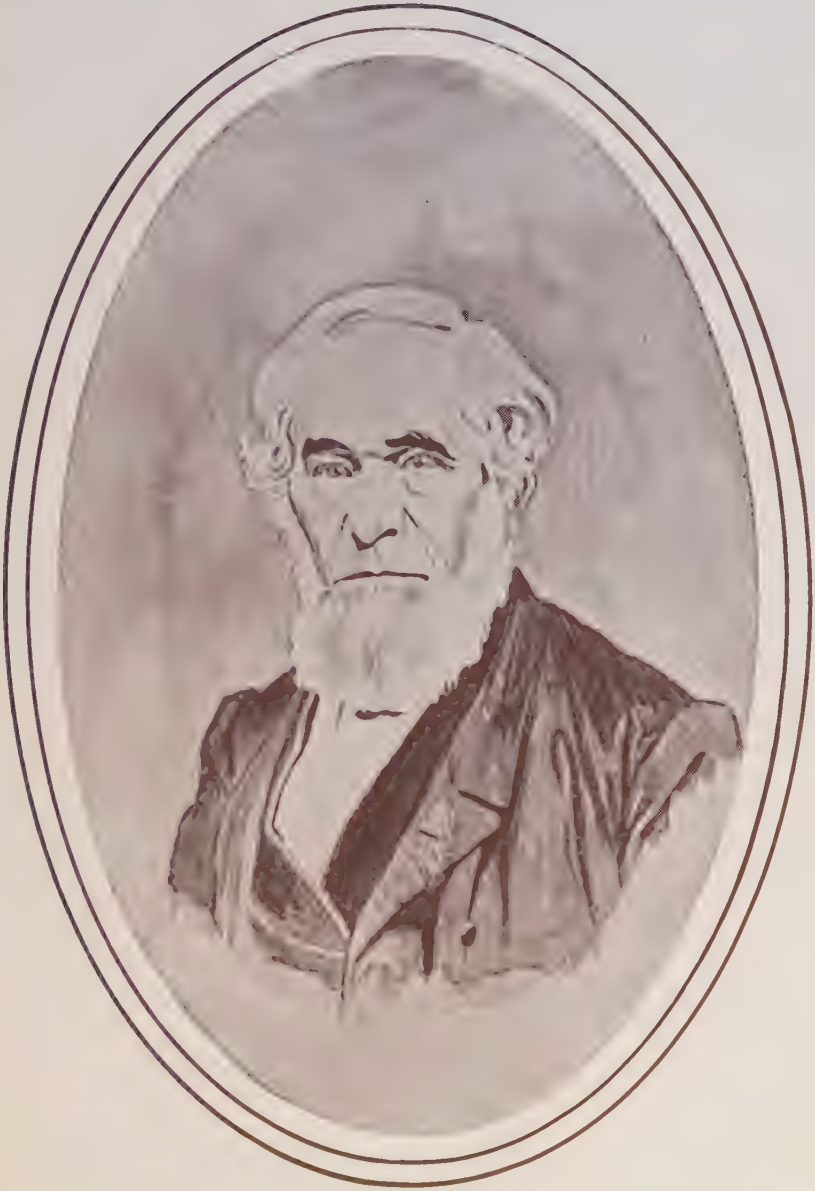
" Pa's cousin Stella, dressed up in some of her ma's old clothes fer a mask ball. Pa drawed in that streak and that printin'. He's a reg'lar artist and he ain't never had a lesson in his life, neither.

" He calls this pitchure ' Stella as Ajax defyin' th' lightnin'! ' "

MATRIMONY

"Here's Deacon Samuel Phillips. He married ma's greatuncle Myron's widow, but I don't know what relation that makes him t' us. He's an awful good man, but clost. Pa says onct he got an awful jolt t' Chicago, where him and some other men went t' sell their stock. It seems that after they got their tradin' done they went down town t' one of them stylish hotels fer dinner. Deacon hadn't never been in one of them places before and didn't know nothin' 'bout 'm. There was breaded veal cutlets on th' bill-of-fare and Deacon liked 'm, so he ordered 'm, along with a lot of other stuff, without noticin' th' price. Bimeby th' bill come, and it was fer two-fifty. 'Two-fifty!' the deacon hollers. 'Why Heck! man, I kin buy a calf fer that money!' he says.

"Turn over."



"Ma's cousins, Delmer and Beezum Morse. 'Th' Sausage Brothers,' pa calls 'm, 'count of their shape. But they're awful stout, and good rasslers, both of 'm, 'specially th' littlest one, Delmer. Onct him and Beezum got t' rasslin' in th' parlor and Delmer throwed Beezum in th' coal box and broke his rib."

"That's pa's Aunt Amanda Merritt Burrows. Me and my brother Frank allus run and hide when we see her comin', 'cause she allus kisses a feller and wants 'm t' pick her some berries, or somethin'. That's her long suit, though, as pa says — berries. Pa says she won't be happy in parrydise without they've got berries there; says he bets there'll be a great old scramblin' amongst th' angels, too, t' keep from gittin' kissed.

"Turn over."

"Ed and Charley Peters, pa's cousins down t' Peory. They're th' stylishest relations we got."

" Wilbur Peebles, that is. He's ma's cousin. Ain't he got funny hair? One time he went t' sleep in meetin' and pa took and done up his hair weth yalluh ribbons off'm cigars. Pa says Wilbur looked awful comical — jist like a horse's mane at th' fair. And Wilbur's awful absent minded. Onct he was t' our house alone and he decided he'd go down town, so he left a note t' let ma know. It said, ' Gone down town. Will be back at five. Have hid key under mat.' Wasn't that silly?

" Turn over."

"That's my little cousin, Johnnie Aiken, down t' Brimfield. Ain't he cute? He's jist th' worst little feller t' ast questions yuh ever see. And th' funniest ones! Onct th' persidin' elder was t' their house and he hadn't no more'n said th' blessin' till Johnnie ups and says, 'Say, pa, how fur kin a cat spit?' he says."

"That's Aunt Minervy Hopkins, pa's aunt. She believed in sperrits.

"Turn over."

"Uncle Jed Doty and his wife, Aunt Phoebe. He's ma's half-brother and he's an awful good singer. Ust t' travel weth Doc Lighthall. He's handsome, too, I think; but Aunt Phoebe ain't very. Ma says she ust t' be awful purty till after she had th' rheumatism s' bad, but pa says he guesses she must a-had it before ever he see her."

"Cousin Willie Peebles, a nice little feller, but funny. That there jaw ain't swelled. Jist nacherul. Pa says Willie's th' mumpiest lookin' boy he ever see."

" Uncle Charley Sparks, that is. He's awfully witty. Onct when Aunt Kate said she liked a clock fer company, its tick was s' comfortin', and gramma said she liked a dog better, Uncle Charley he ups and says, ' Would yuh want th' dog t' have ticks, ma? ' he says.

" Turn over."

"That's Uncle Abner Sedley. He's th' most stubborn person in our fambly, even if he is a preacher. One time last winter he got awful mad at a church meetin' 'cause things didn't go his way and stomped out, yellin', 'My hands is clear; I wash my skirts of th' whole matter!' he says. Then he found he'd fergot his specs and he had t' sneak back in and git 'm, weth ever'body snickerin'. I guess he felt purty cheap.

"Turn over."

"That's my cousin, Edna Sparks. She ain't very smart and she's got a voice that's a terror to snakes, but her ma thinks she kin sing and's allus sickin' her on t' do it. Pa says onct th' silly thing says when her ma was urgin' her before comp'ny, 'Aw, ma, I can't sing, my hands is chapped.' I don't believe she ever done it, though. Jist another of pa's jokes, I bet.

"Turn over."

"That's ma's brother, Uncle Billy Sparks. Ain't he handsome? Jist take a look at them eyes. And he's smart, too — smart as Uncle Charlie, purty nigh. Onct his mother-in-law come t' see 'em and staid a long time and was awful cross and Uncle Billy got tired of it and took and put a wad of cotton in her ear trumpet so she couldn't hear a thing, and she thought she was goin' plumb deef and left that day fer home to see her doctor. Wasn't that cute of him?"

"That there's ma's greatuncle Peter. He was awful well off, and proud of it. Onct when th' minister was raisin' money t' pay fer th' new church he preached and he preached, right at Uncle Pete, purty nigh, and bimeby Uncle Pete he got up from his front corner seat and turned round toward th' people and hollered, 'I'll give another hunderd dollars t' th' Lord, and yuh all know I kin pay it!' he says.

"Turn over."

"That's Uncle Jerry Sparks, ma's brother. He was a lieutenant of artil'ry. Pa says ef he was a rebel and seen Uncle Jerry comin' weth that 'spression onto his mug he wouldn't only hit th' high places."

" That's Evans Billhorn, a cousin of ma's by his first wife. He ust t' keep a butcher shop down t' Peory and he was so strong he could throw down a steer. Onct pa made a mistake talkin' t' Evans. Evans was a-braggin' 'bout how he could rassle, and pa ups and says, ' Huh! you couldn't throw nothin' but a fit,' he says. Say! it never took less 'n two doctors t' fix all th' things about pa that was broke."

" Still, Evans is most awful clumsy, too. One time when he was t' our house he knocked off a real cluny vase of ma's and broke it and his wife says, ' Evans Billhorn, th' next time I take you anywheres I'll crate yuh! ' she says. Pa kep' a piece of that vase fer a long time. ' Pore feller suff'rer,' he called it.

" Turn over."

"That's Perfessor Tweedie. He teaches penmanship and he knows Shakespeare better 'n old Mahomet knowed th' Koran, pa says. Ain't he a hairy feller, though? Onct him 'n Frank Mendenhall was a-doin' Brutus and Cassius wrapped up in sheets in Liberty Hall and when Prof says, 'Here is muh dagger and here muh naked breast,' pa hollers out, 'Git a shave, Prof!' Well, sir, it purty nigh busted up th' show."

"That's Cousin Flora Burgstresser. She's th' belle of Beardstown. Her hair's so long she kin set on it. Onct a hair tonic company offered her a pile of money — most a hunderd dollars — fer her pitchure fer their adver-tise-ment, but she wouldn't.

"Them society ladies don't like notority."

"That's Winfield Scott Zachary Taylor Peebles, ma's cousin. He was named fer two heroes of th' rev-lutionary war, I think it was; anyway, he could allus think of th' noblest things t' say! Onct when he was in th' war an officer died and they put Cousin Win in his place, so that's how he got t' be a corporal. First thing he says was, after th' president or whoever it was give him th' place, 'Boys,' he says, 'if I fall in this day's battle, march over muh dead corpse as you would that of a common private!' he says.

"Turn over."

"Uncle Adoniram Burgstresser, ma's uncle. He was a farmer and hardshell preacher. Onct when ma says, 'Uncle Ad was a power!' pa says, 'Git out! You don't mean power, you mean pow-wower.' That made ma purty mad, I tell you. Uncle Ad was awful clost. One time he went into a hardware store t' git a tin cup and after he'd looked careful at sev'ral he says, 'How much is this one?' 'Nickel,' says th' storekeeper. Then Uncle Ad says, 'I s'pose yuh make th' usual reduction t' th' clergy?' he says.

"Turn over."

'' That there's Emma Beale. She's an awful nice, refined lady. Why, one time when her pa was a-runnin' a tailor shop and Emma was workin' there, pa took a pair of pants t' have 'm pressed fer a weddin' and when he went t' git 'm Emma says, ' Mr. Peters,' she says, ' did you know there was a hole in one of th' limbs of yer trousers? ' she says. And pa, he jist haw-hawed right in her face, th' old coarse thing! ''

" I don't know who them fellers are, 'cept that big one in front there. That's Ole Ensgaard. Ust t' be my Uncle Joe's hired man. Afterwards he went up t' Dakota and got 'lected t' th' legislature. Pa says he was awful green and they told him all he'd need t' do was t' write Mr. Jim Hill t' let him know he was there and he'd git a railroad pass. So Ole writes, ' Mester Yim Hill, Sen-ta Pole: Ay ban har — Ole Ensgaard,' and Mr. Hill writes right back: ' Ay ban har, too. — Yim Hill.' Uncle Charley Sparks, he says that there's a stock story. Says he's heard it told about a thousand differ'nt fellers. Ma calls pa and Uncle Charley ' th' arrival wits.' Says they're kinda jealous of each other.

" Turn over."

"That there's my cousin, Alvy Burgstresser, weth his cornet. He plays in th' choir. First time pa heard 'm he says when he come home, 'That choir 'll never succeed till they dehorn Alvy,' he says.

"Turn over."

"That's ma's brother-in-law, Livingston Burney, out t' Kansas. He's a doctor, when he ain't out talkin' politics, which ain't often. He don't half pervide fer his fambly and onct his boy run away and went clean t' Chicago to my Aunt Sarah's and when she wrote Burney about it he sent back a sassy letter, sayin', 'I'll have you know, madam, that I'm th' father of th' pop'list party in Kansas.' Aunt Sade set right down and wrote him back, 'If you ain't a better father t' th' party,' she says, 'than you've been t' this boy, the party's in a bad way,' she says."

"That's Mrs. Bemrose and her daughter, Lucreshy. They ust t' live neighbors t' us, but now they've moved t' Yates City. Mrs. Bemrose is a daisy musician. You'd jist ort t' hear her sing,

" ' Oh, th' dirty little coward
That shot Doctor Howard
And laid Jesse James in his grave.' "

"Them's Willie and Freddie Sparks. They was cute little fellers but it's awful t' think th' way they turned out, pa says. Willie's an editor and Freddie's a lawyer, and they work together jist fine. Willie gits into trouble, and Freddie, he gits him out."

"Perfessor Leander Crabb, that is. He's principal of th' Ellumwood high school and he's a turrible coffee drinker — two quart a day when he was writin' his book, 'Tokens of Hope, or Is This, Then, All?' Pa, he read th' book through, then he says, 'Well, I hope it is,' he says.

"Turn over."

" Them's ma's cousin Peter and his wife and baby, down t' Beardstown. He ain't handsome but he's an awful good man. Pa says onct Cousin Pete was to a party where there was a game t' give a prize t' th' one what'd make th' homeliest face, and th' judge walked right over t' Pete and give him th' prize, and Pete says, supprised like, ' Why, I ain't begun yit,' he says. I reckon it never reely happened; jist one of pa's jokes, I guess.

" Turn over."

"That's Cousin Charlie Freemantle — pa's cousin, he is. He's a rollin' stone — first one place, then another; never satisfied and never gittin' nothin' ahead. He ust t' be allus comin' 'round tellin' where he was goin' next and what big things he was goin' t' do when he got there, till ma got most awful tired of it and says t' him, 'Charlie,' she says, 'did yuh ever reflect that wherever yuh go yuh take yerself weth yuh?' she says.

"Turn over."

" That's Mr. and Mrs. Bundy. He was a nice man but she's quarrelsomer 'n all git out. Don't she look jist like a settin' hen? Onct when Mr. Bundy died why Mrs. Prescott that moved t' Peory she wrote Mrs. Bundy a real nice letter of consolence, I guess it is yuh call it — anyway, Mrs. Bundy fired up, quicker 'n a wink, and says, ' Uh-huh! ' she says, ' well, that's all very nice but it don't pay fer that there spade and waterin' pot them Prescotts borruhed off 'm us and never brung back. I'll learn that tribe they can't soft-soap me! ' she says.

" Turn over."

" That's Bige Turner. He ust t' work in th' print shop fer pa and he certainly was a bad aig, I want yuh t' know. Onct he slep' out on th' sidewalk in front of th' shop all night and pa took and tacked his clothes down all around and when Bige woke up next day he tried t' git up and couldn't and it scairt him most t' death and he hollered, ' Gosh! help! I'm paralyzed,' he says. ' Oh, no yuh ain't, Bige,' pa says, ' but you was yisteddy.'

" Turn over."

" That's Aunt Min, pa's sister, when she was a girl. She was awful good lookin' — is yet, fer that matter. But she ain't never been no housekeeper. Onct pa picked up a shirt she'd been mendin' and took a look at it and says, 'I'd hate like thunder t' have t' reap as Min sews,' he says.

" Turn over."

"And that's pa, put in last fer 'a Garrison finish,' as he says, whatever that means. Honest, now, he don't look a bit like you thought he would, does he? But you could tell he was a wit, though, couldn't yuh? Jist look at them little, shrewd eyes! This pitchure was took when he was editor of th' Argus, before he made his money out of land and insurance. One time, while he was editin', a publisher sent him an adver-tise-ment of a book that told all about how t' run a newspaper and pa he set right down and wrote 'm back they might as well try t' sell a book of travels t' th' Wanderin' Jew.

"That's all — and there's ma a-comin' up th' walk. We got a bigger album 'n this 'n upstairs, som'ers, though. Come over some time and I'll show yuh that 'n.

"Tah-tah! See yuh later."